



MARYLAND

# MD + Responds

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office of Preparedness and Response

NEWS FROM THE MARYLAND PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER CORPS + Spring | Summer 2010

## IN THIS ISSUE

Feature: <i>Winter of 2010</i>	1
Message from Mark Bailey	2
MPVC News	2+5
Education	3
Partners	3
MPVC Support	4
OP&R Info and Updates	4
MPVC Outreach	6



## MISSION

The Maryland Professional Volunteer Corps consists of health care and community professionals ready to assist with disaster and emergency recovery during a declared emergency or disaster situation.



The winter of 2009/2010 proved to be a record setting one that will long be remembered by the residents of Maryland. Three major storm systems dumped nearly a combined 7 feet of snow on most portions of the state. The first one struck in December followed by back-to-back snowfalls in February that paralyzed the region. It was difficult to escape the consequences of this event as nearly every aspect of life as we know it was significantly altered during and immediately following the storms. Through it all, private industry and local and state resources worked tirelessly to mitigate the impact of the snowfall.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) located in Reisterstown was staffed around-the-clock by agencies entrusted with responding to emergency situations, including representation from the DHMH Office of Preparedness and Response

The storms taxed resources significantly. Road snow removal was certainly a major concern. There were times during the third snowfall when all vehicles were pulled off the roads due to whiteout conditions. This presented a challenge to emergency responders tasked with acting on

911 calls. The National Guard has Humvee vehicles that can be called upon to traverse through the snow but even these were not allowed to be out during the hours when the blizzard was in its full fury.

One of the primary goals of any response effort is to minimize loss of life. The treacherous driving conditions certainly challenged travelers but the Herculean efforts of road crews allowed for safe passage when absolutely necessary. Individuals with chronic medical conditions requiring skilled medical care were also put at risk as they were either not able to get to their scheduled treatments or their treating specialists were not able to get to them to render care. Getting medical supplies to homes with residents reliant upon deliveries for their health and well-being was difficult to impossible. Loss of power in homes provided many challenges also. Preventing food

*continued on page 5*

## MESSAGE FROM MARK BAILEY

MARYLAND PROFESSIONAL  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

It has been an exciting but very busy time to be involved in the field of public health. Over the past 14 months there have been numerous events which have taxed the resources and resiliency of public health and partnering agencies. These include the 2009 inauguration activities, the H1N1 pandemic, the Haitian earthquake and most recently the series of snow storms that hammered the state. These events provided ample opportunity to test the collective resolve of the residents of Maryland and those entrusted to support the well-being of the same.

These events also provided opportunities for MPVC volunteers to step forward and render assistance during trying and tiring times. A telling indication of the dedication of the MPVC volunteers is that nearly 25% of the targeted volunteers receiving a request to assist with the Haitian airport repatriation effort responded positively. This is an amazing response, far exceeding the norm. Those of you that have attended MPVC trainings have heard me say it's great to have you on board but we hope never to use you. With the need arising time and time again, it is great to know how on board you really are.

Many of you called to see if an opportunity was available to travel to Haiti. At this moment the situation there is still very unstable and no formal requests for support have been received. In the coming months, there may be a chance for volunteers to support that country's recovery. As we learned through the Katrina tragedy---recovery from these catastrophes "is a marathon, not a sprint."

The new MDResponds volunteer management system has performed flawlessly during the volunteer callouts, providing a quick and efficient way to solicit assistance. If you have not yet registered in this new system, please do so soon.

The support efforts of the MPVC volunteers have been recognized by state and local authorities. It is terrific that there are so many of you ready, willing and able to respond to support requests. Maryland is truly a better prepared state because of your dedication.

MPVC



# Frederick County Health Department Responds to H1N1 Influenza

Frederick County has been incredibly fortunate this flu season to have had widespread community support for the Health Department H1N1 flu clinics. These clinics were organized and primarily staffed by the Frederick County Health Department, and we also were able to work with volunteers from Citizen's Services, Department of Aging, Department of Social Services, Department of Public Works, Emergency Preparedness, EMS, Family Partnership, Head Start, Home Call, IIT, Maryland Professional Volunteer Corps, Parks and Recreation, Red Cross, Volunteer Frederick, and individual volunteers. The amazing volunteer response is a testament to the caring community of which Frederick County is so proud.

Our public clinics began in November with residents registering online or by phone. Registrants were randomized and called to schedule appointments for a clinic appointment. The number of appointments was based on vaccine availability. The majority of our public clinics from November through February were held at the former Circuit City building in Frederick, which is currently owned by the Church of the Redeemer and was made available to us while the church's renovations were pending.

Appointments were made in half hour increments to allow for a steady stream of vaccinations with minimal wait time. This system worked very well in reducing stress during a very busy flu season, and the community and clinic staff responded positively. In addition to our public clinics, intranasal H1N1 flu vaccinations were also offered in Frederick County's elementary schools in November and December. Travel teams of Health Department staff brought H1N1 clinics to various locations around the county to allow as many county residents as possible to have easy access to the vaccine. Currently, the vaccination is available on a walk-in basis at the Frederick County Health Department at least two days a week. Please check our website (<http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/healthdept>) or call 301-600-1029 for details.

As of mid-March, the Frederick County Health Department has given approximately 18,000 vaccinations free of charge and hosted well over 100 H1N1 flu vaccination clinics. This has been a tremendous effort on the part of the whole Health Department and community, so thank you for your part in protecting our community from H1N1 influenza!



## EDUCATION

### FIELD EXERCISE AT TOWSON UNIVERSITY

The Towson University campus was again the site for a field exercise testing the internal resources of the school to respond to a disaster; in this case a building collapse resulting in simulated casualties and fatalities. The school enlisted planning support from external agencies including the state Department of Human Resources, Behavioral Health Services, the Office of Preparedness and Response, the state Mortuary Disaster Response Team, volunteers from the Baltimore County Medical Reserve Corp, the Maryland Civilian Defense Force and the MPVC.

Besides campus students, children as well as senior citizens recruited through the County's Department of Aging were enlisted as victims.

The exercise gave the university and the support agencies a hands-on opportunity to practice for an actual disaster. This was the third annual exercise. New scenarios and situations are introduced each year to ensure that it challenges the participants. The University is grateful for the support of the MPVC in this effort.



## OUR PARTNERS



# H1N1

## RESPONSE COLLABORATION

Last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Strategic National Stockpile (DSNS or "SNS") partnered with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DHMH) Office of Preparedness and Response (OP&R) in response to the H1N1 outbreak (Swine Flu).

The SNS shipped thousands of courses of antivirals, as well as hundreds of thousands of special surgical masks (N-95's), surgical gloves, protective gowns, and various other types of "personal protective equipment" (PPE) to not only Maryland but every other State and US Territory in the Union.

In the Fall of 2009 Maryland successfully received, stored, staged and then subsequently distributed to local health jurisdictions a certain percentage of this medical countermeasure material.

This highly successful collaboration among federal, state, and local health jurisdictions went a long way in blunting the overall debilitating effect of the H1N1 flu on not only Maryland's citizens, but also on the remainder of the United States' and Territories' population.

*Scott D. Rice,  
Public Health Advisor  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*



## MPVC SUPPORT

### AMAZING!

Support of the various volunteer missions over the past year has been phenomenal. Feedback from the “receiving” agencies has been overwhelmingly positive and they have been most grateful for the support provided. As has been noted, MPVC volunteers have responded to assist with the state inauguration shelters in 2009, the ongoing local health department H1N1 clinics, the state H1N1 hotline, for transporting medical staff during the blizzard and for providing on-call availability for Haitian repatriation efforts (didn’t happen). Many volunteers also called immediately



after the Haitian earthquake struck to indicate they would be available to deploy to Haiti should an opportunity present.

These missions have provided a chance for the MPVC staff to meet some of you and witness your dedication and skills in action. On behalf of the residents of Maryland, thank you!

### KUDOS

Lyn Van Gilder is an administrative assistant in the Office of Preparedness and Response here at DHMH. Lynn has been supporting the MPVC for over a year now and is very dedicated

to promoting the cause and the organization. This fall she took on a task that would probably bring a lesser person to his/her knees—to call over 2,600 MPVC volunteers that we only have phone numbers for and encourage them to “re-register” in the new MDResponds volunteer management system. Lynn has been plowing her way through the alphabet over these past few months and her efforts have paid dividends in many ways. She has been very persuasive in getting volunteers to register and has answered many questions about the program. Thank you Lynn for your dedication to this effort.

## OP+R INFO AND UPDATES

### EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION 8 & THE SNOW EVENTS

The historic events of 2009 and 2010 created major challenges for residents of Maryland at many levels. The first February blizzard brought the entire state to a halt. Snow plows and National Guard Humvees were even called off the road for several hours. Through it all, the health needs of Maryland residents had to be considered and addressed.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is the lead agency for Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF 8), Public Health and Medical Services in the state of Maryland. Prior to and when an emergency

is declared, contingency planning and plans are implemented to ensure that residents requiring medical care and intervention are able to access care. This is a cooperative effort with several other agencies including the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Service Systems (MIEMMS), local hospitals, long-term care facilities, Federally Qualified Health Centers, community health centers, dialysis centers, health departments and the National Guard. Residents with chronic health conditions requiring regular treatments in their home or at a health center may not be able to

postpone or delay these treatments due to weather. Residents requiring emergency transport must also be considered. Hospitals and other health facilities may need assistance in getting their critical employees to work.

DHMH has resources at its disposal to assist with these situations. For example, National Guard Humvees were used to transport staff to work. Volunteers were contacted and subsequently assisted with getting home health nurses to patient homes.

DHMH also assisted with ensuring support was directed to collapsed livestock buildings. DHMH

worked with local health departments, the Department of Agriculture and sanitarians to ensure that effected animals’ needs were addressed.

DHMH provided a continuous presence at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) during all of these weather events to coordinate the physical and mental health of residents.

As an MPVC volunteer, you are an important resource for ESF 8 to supplant health and medical services during an emergency. Your commitment to this effort is commendable.

*Thank  
you.*

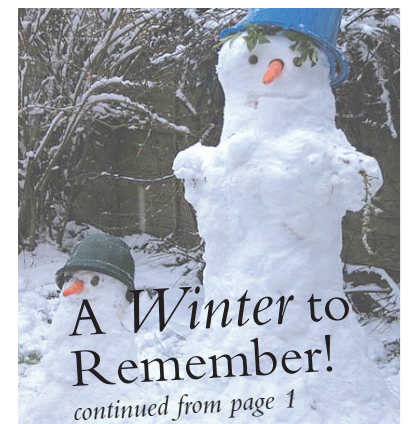


In September 2009 the Maryland Professional Volunteer Corps unveiled our new online volunteer management system, called MDResponds. The system is a resource for entities such as the MPVC, DHMH, hospitals, local MRC's and local health department emergency response staff and volunteers. MDResponds is web-based and allows volunteers to register online and update their contact and demographic information regularly via password protected access. Components include a "mission manager" that will track and manage a volunteer's deployment from beginning to end. This system has been well tested and adopted by many of our neighboring states and other states throughout the country such as Louisiana and Florida.

MDResponds ensures that Maryland meets Emergency System for the Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) national standards. It provides for ongoing and continuous access to individual volunteer licensing and credentialing agencies. The MPVC has asked all of our volunteers to register anew with MDResponds to ensure the program has the latest information relating to contact information, professional skills, training, and availability. Individual volunteer information is housed in a secure database with access limited to the volunteer and the

volunteer program administrator for each volunteer or emergency response unit. The initial registration process can be done in about 5 minutes, and once registered volunteers can go back and fill in the rest of the information asked at their leisure.

We are grateful for those of you who took the time to register. If you have not yet registered we are once again asking that you do so now. Up to this point the MPVC has continued using our older databases for contacting and calling out volunteers. As of June, 2010 we will make the switch to MDResponds and will only use that system as our means of contacting volunteers. If you would like to remain a member of the MPVC it is imperative that you register with MDResponds. The website to register or update your information is [MDResponds.dhmvh.maryland.gov](http://MDResponds.dhmvh.maryland.gov).



spoilage becomes a concern. It truly became a public health event.

The snowfall likewise stressed buildings with flat roofs. MEMA set up a series of conference calls with structural engineers, public health officials, local municipality representatives and health care facility staff. The goal of the calls was to determine how best to prevent roof collapses. Despite these efforts, there were a number of farm buildings that collapsed which resulted in injuries and loss of life for cattle and poultry. This became another public health issue as the carcasses of the animals had to be disposed of in a proper manner, requiring the support of multiple agencies including veterinarians registered through the MPVC.

The snowstorms did result in a declared state of emergency and taxed the will and resources of the state. Collectively, Maryland responded splendidly and should be proud of the manner in which this very difficult situation was dealt with. There is much that goes on behind the scenes that allows for a weather related emergencies to be handled. Despite the intensity of the storm, the impact on the health and well-being of the residents of this state was minimal.



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# MPVC OUTREACH

## RECRUITMENT: *Taking the Show on the Road*



**The office staff has been attempting to determine the viable volunteers from the list of approximately 6,000 volunteers for which we have some semblance of contact information.**

As noted throughout this newsletter, the demand and need for MPVC volunteers has accelerated in the past 12 months. This does not allow for a lull in recruitment effort. Of late, the MPVC has renewed a relationship with MedChi as a recruitment resource, done multiple presentations for various professional organizations and placed its first ad in the most widely distributed nursing journal in the state of Maryland. As a member of MPVC,

you can support the cause by introducing your colleagues to this opportunity. The offer still stands for MPVC staff to “take the show on the road” if you are aware of a chance to recruit among a group of interested individuals. The licensing board web sites will be updated to better reflect current MPVC operations and for recruitment purposes.

An MPVC brochure will be available this spring. Call the office for brochure copies or if you have any recruitment suggestions or ideas.